

All orthodox Christians believe in the second coming of our Lord, but there is diversity of opinion as to whether His coming will usher in the millennium, or be after the millennium.

The post-millennialists believe that under the influence of the Gospel all the world will be converted thus bring about a reign of peace and righteousness. But it seems to me that prevailing facts and conditions should teach anyone the fallacy of this theory. The churches of Christ have been given out the Gospel for nearly 2,000 years and yet the world as a whole is no nearer conversion than when it began. True, the Gospel has been a wonderful influence in the world for good. Under its influence men have been converted from savagery to Christianity. The gospel, instead of being the means of salvation to all men, will cause some men to receive the greater damnation. Because having, under the blessed influence of the gospel, heard of the true and living way, they will assume to invent ways of their own, and thus rebel against their Maker. Wicked men, instead of getting better, will grow worse and worse.



Our post-millennial friends, because of their erroneous views regarding the coming of Christ, have been led to very wild, spasmodic and even fanatic efforts of enlisting the world to the claims of Christianity. Such expressions as we have heard from religious enthusiasts as "taking the world for Christ" are wholly without foundation in the Holy Scriptures. We have also heard that if we would give our money they would save souls, as if souls could be purchased with money. Peter tells us we "are not redeemed with silver and gold-but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

I just as firmly believe that the coming of Christ will be premillennial as I believe He is coming at all, and I know He is coming for the Bible teaches that in unmistakable terms.

I believe the coming of Christ to be premillennial for the following reasons:

1. Because of certain facts and conditions that Jesus and His Apostles taught would prevail until He comes.

Jesus taught that we would be cross bearers in this world. "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew 16:24. There is no spiritual affinity between a regenerated child of God and the world, hence a cross there; he is conscious of an inner condition of sin, hence another cross. And this condition exists till the end.

Jesus also taught that His children would be hated by the world. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:18-19).

It is revealed that God's children shall have tribulation in the world. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

It is further revealed that God's children will be persecuted vilely in the world. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Matthew 5:11. (See also 2nd Corinthians 4:17-18.)

Jesus revealed that there would be divisions in the world because of Him and His doctrines. See Luke 12:32, 51-53. He said He did not come to bring peace by division. Father would be against son, mother against daughter, etc.

2. I believe the coming of Christ to be premillennial because He will come to the earth in wrath and judgment.

If the whole world were saved, Jesus would not come to take vengeance and pour out His wrath upon it. But since the world will abound in iniquity and sin, the Lord will come and execute His righteous judgment upon it. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14-15).

In the 24th chapter of Matthew we also learn that all the world will not be saved when Jesus comes, for all the nations are gathered before Him, and He separateth them as a shepherd divideth his flocks, and the sheep are placed at His right hand, and the goats at His left hand.

Also, "...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" 2nd Thessalonians 1:7-8. Thus we see that Jesus will come the second time for judgment, which could not be true if all the world were saved when He comes. This is conclusive proof of the premillennial coming of Christ.

3. The fact that Christ will come after the great tribulation is another reason that I believe in the premillennial coming of Christ.

We learn from the Scriptures that his coming will be immediately "after the tribulation of those days" and since this tribulation is before the introduction of the glorious age of Christ, that Christ's coming must be premillennial. The coming of Christ will put an end to those troublous times. See Isaiah 24:16-23; Matthew 24:21; and Luke 21:24.

4. The increasing intensity of wickedness until the end proves the second coming of Christ to be premillennial.

We are told by Jesus Himself that in the day of His coming the moral conditions of the world would be like that of Noah's day. Surely no one thinks the moral condition of Noah's time was good. There was only one righteous family living, and me thinks that will be about the ratio at His second coming. The world at that time was in a serious state of wickedness, sin and pollution, and it will be when He comes again. And in such a moral state there could be no righteous reign. But the coming of Christ will usher in a thousand year period of righteous rule which we call the millennium.

In the last chapter I noticed the condition of the world morally when Jesus comes, and that condition could not be that of a converted world, hence the coming of Christ will be premillennial.

5. A Jewish Remnant is to be saved before the Millennium is ushered in.

This remnant will not be saved before the coming of Christ, but in immediate connection with His coming. The fact was typified by the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. "*And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*" 1st Corinthians 15:8. The word translated "out of due time" is "ektromati" and means literally, "before due time." The word "Ektroma" means an abortive birth, and abortion. Thus Paul regards his conversion as before due time nationally. Just as the appearance of Christ to Paul brought conviction, repentance and conversion to Paul, so will His appearance the second time bring repentance and conversion to this Jewish remnant. I shall deal more at length upon this question in a succeeding chapter.

6. Before the Millennium is ushered in, the tares will be separated from the wheat.

See Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43. When the servants asked if they should gather up the tares they were commanded to let the tares grow. Jesus, in His interpretation, informs us that the tares are the children of the age, and the reapers are the angels. So when Jesus come, the wicked will be separated from the good. This proves the coming of Christ to be premillennial.

7. The symbolical Beast of Revelation with the Woman drunk with the blood of saints will exist and persecute God's elect till Jesus comes.

The Beast symbolizes the ten kingdoms of western Europe; the woman symbolizes Roman Catholic hierarchy. The woman riding on the back of the beast symbolizes the power and influence the Pope of Rome exercises over these kingdoms in using them as agents in the terrible persecutions of the true church. But in 1870 Rome lost her temporal power which is referred to in Revelation as a "deadly wound" but this wound was to be healed, which I think happened in 1929. Rome is just as blood thirsty today as ever and with the regaining of temporal power we may expect her to continue her bloody persecutions until Jesus comes. She has already actually begun her bloody work in the foreign land. This proves the coming of Christ to be premillennial for if the world were converted when Jesus comes, there would be no vicious beast to inflict persecution.

8. The whole house of Israel is to be restored, and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah are to be reunited before the millennium.

This is plainly shown in Ezekiel 37 by the vision of the "valley of dry bones," and the "sign of the two sticks." The Lord announces the restoration in Ezek. 36:24-38 and in the 37th chapter He gives the method of its accomplishment. The bones are representative of the whole house of Israel who shall be living at that time. The graves represent the nations in which they shall be dwelling. The Lord shall first bring them into their own land, Ezekiel 37:12. Then they shall be converted and filled with the Spirit, verses 13 and 14. Then the two sticks (tribes) are united into one nation, verses 19-21. Jehovah's purpose is fully outlined for them in verses 21-27. Verse 28 indicates a marked degree of knowledge of Jehovah among the Gentiles. See also 1st Samuel 11:10; Acts 15:16-17.

9. Antichrist will appear and reign till destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's appearing.

See 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-11. There could be no millennium during the reign of Antichrist and since he reigns till he is destroyed by the "brightness of His coming," the coming of Christ must be premillennial. See in this connection Daniel 7:21-27.

This Antichrist is to speak great swelling words against the "Most High" and is to "wear out the saints," but when the judgment is set, his dominion shall be taken away.

More will be said about this event in the succeeding chapter.

10. The resurrection of the righteous will take place before the Millennium.

Since the righteous are to reign with Christ and many of them will be sleeping in the earth when Jesus comes, their resurrection will necessarily take place before the millennium. Revelation 20:4 teaches us that we shall *"reign with Christ a thousand years."* Some do not accept this scripture as literal or rather do not accept the literal meaning of it, but regard it as figurative. There is nothing in it to suggest a figure, but it is a plain declaration that the resurrection of the just will precede that of the unjust by a thousand years. Paul tells us that *"the dead in Christ shall rise first."* And since the just are not raised till Christ raises them at His coming and they are raised before the thousand year reign, we naturally conclude that the coming of Christ will be premillennial.

11. The devil will be bound before the Millennium.

There can be no reign of peace and righteousness as long as the devil has control as he has in the world today. In Revelation 20:1-3, we are told that the Devil will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit that he should not deceive the nations till the thousand years were finished. When the devil will be bound and cast into outer darkness, exterminated from the earth, then there can be a reign of righteousness in the earth. But the fact that there can be no millennium while the Devil is loose and he is to be bound by Christ at His coming proves Christ's coming to be premillennial.

- By J. E. Cobb, from the book The Second Coming of Christ



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